

# Notes on Surah of Yusuf (Joseph)<sup>1</sup>

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In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

## Introduction

At first that I began to study the Quran and mystical and religious books, my intention was solely to obtain a greater awareness and knowledge of my religious beliefs and matters, and I often took notes of the aforesaid subjects for my personal use. Therefore, these notes did not have a proper order and coherence. Nonetheless, now that this tariqa responsibility has been laid upon me, I am responsible to provide well-ordered answers to the questions asked from me, related to mystical issues. In addition, since in responding to each question, I generally explain all the matters related to that subject, they may not be of a proper order because I consecutively express all the issues. Thus, I hope the audience would organize the stated materials in their mind as is the best.

In addition, sometimes during my thoughts and studies, I noticed things that others may have not remarked them or they been attended less frequently. In the case of Moses (AS), the Quran says that God inspired Moses's mother: "...**Suckle him; but when you fear for him (from the agents of the pharaoh), cast him into the river**<sup>2</sup>". Most of people have not noticed the fact that while it was certain that the Pharaoh had already ordered to kill all the children, but, God did not straightaway say to cast him into the river. I was thinking what God required us to understand from this term, until I realized maybe he has asked us to conclude that the fear of an incident should not make us to change the common practice and convention of customs, and here, God said to the mother of Moses (AS) that if you were then afraid, cast him into the river. Perhaps, if she suckled him and was not afraid afterwards, nothing would have happened to Moses and he could grow normally. If God wished to scare the mother of Moses, He could do that by telling her to immediately cast the child into the river, but He said to suckle him at first, and if you were scared, then do the rest. This was the point that I understood from this story and stated it as an example here.

## Quranic stories

The difference between the stories stated in the Quran and in the other holy books (including Torah, Gospel, or Zohar «Jewish mystical book») is that occurrence of the events mentioned in the Quran is definite, while in the rest of the holy books, it is likely that the story has not happened as cited, or some others have embellished the story.

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<sup>1</sup> The present text is an oral statement, which was stated in a meeting on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009, in response to a number of questions with regard to Surah of Yusuf (Joseph) and the story of the Prophet Joseph (AS), and this paper is the written text.

<sup>2</sup> Quran, Surah: Al-Qasas, Verse: 7. وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ فَإِذَا خَفْتِ عَلَيْهِ فَأَلْقِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ

Another point is that why in the Quran and the other divine books, the subjects are expressed as stories? For instance, the contents of the current Torah are mostly as stories and less of independent words of Moses (AS) are included. The reason is that the human mind is as such that stories substantially impact upon it and this is also why movies and cinema are so popular in our era. I remember when I was a teenager; children or young people went to cinemas, and when they came out of the hall, they imagined themselves as the heroes of the film. Thus, in the same way, stories and tales also influence on human beings.

Another important issue about the stories of the Quran is that the Quran has no intention of storytelling. Instead, from the past events, it only indicates the sections that we should take a lesson from and does not address the happenings that are not in our concern. For instance, if someone has beaten some other during a story, since it is not of our concern, it has not been mentioned. For example, with regard to the Prophet Moses (AS), where one of his followers and one of the Pharaoh's people (Moses' foes) were involved in a quarrel, the Quran says: **“The one from his faction called for help to him against the one from his enemy, so Moses struck him and [unintentionally] killed him<sup>1</sup>”**. And it then says: **“This is from the work of Satan. Indeed, he is a manifest, misleading enemy<sup>2</sup>”**. But the Quran does not state the full explanation and reason of the clash between them and only says the points from which we should take a lesson.

### Notes on Surah of Yusuf (Joseph)

In Surah of Yusuf, where the Quran says the story of the Prophet Joseph (AS), the wife of the ruler (Aziz) of Egypt, named Zuleika, enters the story and plays her role until the point that she admits the innocence of Joseph and says: **“Now the truth has become evident. It was I who sought to seduce him, and indeed, he is of the truthful<sup>3</sup>”**.

From this point on, the Quran does not any longer mention the name of Zuleika and her story is not continued; however, in the authentic sayings of the prophets and the stories in the Torah, the rest of her story is also included. In the narrations from the Immaculate Imams (AS), they were asked about the story of Zuleika and replied. Their answers are, of course, based on the oral tales narrated from the former prophets chest by chest, some of which are mentioned in the Torah, and in case we realize that the narratives are authentic, we can consequently cite them.

There is another issue about Zuleika in Surah of Yusuf. The Quran does not name her and only explains her actions. In the Quran, no woman is mentioned but Mary. What is basically observed in the wording of stories in the Quran, which is instructive for us, is that the Quran has hardly referred to people's names in a bad way, but rather condemned their inappropriate actions. For example, the Prophet Lot (AS) did not tell his people that I hate you, but said **“Indeed, I am, toward your deed, of those who detest [it]<sup>4</sup>”**. The Quran only mentioned a few names badly. For instance, in Surah of Al-Masad, it recalls the Prophet Muhammad's uncle, Abu Lahab, badly and says: **“May the hands of Abu Lahab be ruined,**

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<sup>1</sup> Quran, Surah: Al-Qasas, Verse: 15, “فَاسْتَعَانَهُ الَّذِي مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ عَلَى الَّذِي مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ فَوَكَّرَهُ مَوْسَىٰ فَفَقَّصَىٰ”.

<sup>2</sup> Quran, Surah: Al-Qasas, Verse: 15, “هَذَا مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ مُضِلٌّ مُبِينٌ”.

<sup>3</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 51, “الآنَ حَصْحَصَ الْحَقُّ أَنَا رَاوِدْتُهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ”.

<sup>4</sup> Quran, Surah: Ash-Shu'ara', Verse: 168, “إِنِّي لَعَمَلِكُمْ مِنَ الْقَالِينَ”.

**and ruined is he<sup>1</sup>**”, and following the verse, it also denounces Abu Lahab’s wife and says: **“And his wife [as well] - the carrier of firewood<sup>2</sup>”**.

When the Quran mentions the pharaoh’s name in general, it does not specifically state any particular one; in contrast, when it recalls the good and righteous people, it expresses their name, as it mentions the names of the Prophet Joseph (Yusuf), Jacob (Yaqub), and Isaac (Is'haq). As previously said, the Quran does not intend to explain individuals’ lives, but it magnifies the useful and beneficial parts of the story for us to learn lessons. For instance, even though Surah of Yusuf is devoted to the biography of the Prophet Joseph, it only states the parts that should be our model, and does not even name Joseph’s mother, whose name is Rachel (Rahil).

At the beginning of Surah of Yusuf, the Quran expresses the reason for its specific approach of storytelling: **“We relate to you, [O Muhammad], the best of stories in what We have revealed to you of this Qur’an although you were, before it, among the unaware<sup>3</sup>”**. It means we tell you the part of the story, which are appropriate and related to revelation. Moreover, the Quran stays away from any kind of redundancy.

With respect to the phrase **“the best of stories<sup>4</sup>”**, some of the Quran interpreters have considered the word **“stories<sup>5</sup>”** as the plural of **“story<sup>6</sup>”** and meant it as the best of stories, but some others have regarded the word **“stories<sup>7</sup>”** as the infinitive, meaning narration. I first heard from Mr. Saleh Ali Shah that **“the best of stories<sup>8</sup>”** means the best way of storytelling. His viewpoint was engraved in my mind. It means that God says that we tell stories to you with the best method of storytelling, because this fact is undoubted that all divine stories are the best and it is related to our wisdom and understanding of the verse.

Another point about Surah of Yusuf is that this surah is entirely devoted to Joseph’s life and no other story is mentioned in this surah and the whole surah is about one story. The Quran did not state the story of Jacob (AS) completely, but in the Torah, the Prophet Isaac (AS) told his son, Jacob: **“You shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother’s father, and take yourself from there a wife of the daughters of Laban, your mother’s brother<sup>9</sup>”**. The reason Isaac ordered Jacob in this way, perhaps is that Isaac had been very happy with his wife and

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<sup>1</sup> Quran, Surah: Al-Masad, Verse: 1, “تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ”.

<sup>2</sup> Quran, Surah: Al-Masad, Verse: 4, “وَأَمْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ”.

On the sideline of this issue, I express something that I saw myself and could be the reason for some people’s stupid prejudice. When I went to the Hajj in Mecca, the day we wanted to go to Arafat, we passed a street, named “Abu Lahab”. It was very strange. Even though the country was a Muslim one, only because Abu Lahab had been an Arab, they had named the street in his name. Added to that, a person, who was most probably an Iranian Muslim, had written with chalk “May the hands be ruined (تَبَّتْ يَدَا)” above the word Abu Lahab on the panel.

<sup>3</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 3, “نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ”.

<sup>4</sup> أحسن القصص

<sup>5</sup> قصص

<sup>6</sup> قصه

<sup>7</sup> قصص

<sup>8</sup> أحسن القصص

<sup>9</sup> Torah, Genesis, Chapter 28, Verses: 1-3.

wanted his child to choose a wife from the same tribe. This would signify that contrary to the opinions of some researchers and psychologists, endogamy itself is not harmful as long as the parties do not have any major illness. Even God said in the Quran to the Prophet Muhammad that he can marry his uncles' and aunts' daughters: **“O Prophet, indeed We have made lawful to you your wives to whom you have given their due compensation and those your right hand possesses from what Allah has returned to you [of captives] and the daughters of your paternal uncles and the daughters of your paternal aunts and the daughters of your maternal uncles and the daughters of your maternal aunts who emigrated with you<sup>1</sup>”**. And since people of the Quraysh tribe did not have any physical and intellectual impairment and were also his family, most of his marriages were with the girls from the Quraysh tribe.

But the rest of the story of Jacob, according to the Torah, relates to the time Jacob went to his uncle Laban and he saw his cousin Rachel on the way, who had come to take water from the well. He helped her and asked what your name is. She replied: “I am Rachel, the daughter of Laban”. Jacob introduced himself and said that he has come to see his uncle Laban. The Quran has not mentioned this story. Finally, Jacob liked Rachel and fell in love with her. Of course his love was not the kind of love that is nowadays expressed in contemporary novels.

Next, he came to Laban and proposed. It is worth mentioning that Rachel was a pretty girl. In response, Laban said: “It would be even better, because you are my nephew, but you must work seven years for me to let her marry you”. Additionally, it is stated in the Torah: **“And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her<sup>2</sup>”**. The seven years might have been the dowry that they normally gave to the daughter's father and after the seven years, they celebrated the wedding. But at that night, Laban brought his other daughter Leah to Jacob, who was older than Rachel, her eyes were weak, and she was not beautiful. Probably, due to the darkness, no one noticed the issue and Jacob had an intercourse with her; but in the morning, he realized that this girl is not Rachel. He went to Laban and said: “Why have you deceived me? Did I not serve you seven years for Rachel?” Laban said: “We have the custom not to marry the younger daughter as long as the older one is still single and at home”. It should be mentioned that a same custom is also customary in Iran. He continued “Leah was the older daughter, but if you want Rachel, you have to work for another seven years”, and Jacob agreed<sup>3</sup>. From this fact, it becomes apparent that how deeply Jacob had an interest in Rachel for which he spent fourteen years of his life in hard. Jacob had two children from Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin.

His Honorable Jacob had twelve sons, among which only the last two children were from Rachel, and perhaps his special interest to them in comparison with the other children was because of his interest in Rachel. Nonetheless, the Quran did not mention these issues, but they are stated in the Torah. As far as some of the narratins received from the Immaculate Imams are almost in conformity with this part of the Torah, we can be sure of the accuracy of the content of the Torah with regard to this story.

The Quran begins the story of Joseph's life from when he sees a dream. The Quran is

<sup>1</sup> Quran, Surah: Al-`Ahzab, Verse: 50,

“ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَحْلَلْنَا لَكَ أَزْوَاجَكَ اللَّاتِي آتَيْتَ أُجُورَهُنَّ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ مِمَّا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ وَبَنَاتِ عَمَّاتِكَ وَبَنَاتِ خَالَكَ وَبَنَاتِ خَالَاتِكَ اللَّاتِي هَاجَرْنَ مَعَكَ.”

<sup>2</sup> Torah, Genesis, Chapter 29, Verse: 20.

<sup>3</sup> Torah, Genesis, Chapter 29, Verses: 23-31.

not concerned about beforehand and says: “when Joseph said to his father, ‘O my father, indeed stars I have seen [in a dream] eleven and the sun and the moon; I saw them prostrating to me<sup>1</sup>’”. This is where the spiritual essence of Joseph takes shape; because when he told his father about the dream, Jacob responded: “and [God will] complete His favor upon you<sup>2</sup>”. When Joseph grew up, God says: “And when Joseph reached maturity, We gave him judgment and knowledge. And thus We reward the doers of good<sup>3</sup>”. But it is important to note that when he saw that dream, since he had not reached the position of *Ihsan* (goodness) yet, the Quran did not say: “thus We reward the doers of good”, but said: “And thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of narratives and complete His favor upon you and upon the family of Jacob, as He completed it upon your fathers before, Abraham and Isaac. Indeed, your Lord is Knowing and Wise<sup>4</sup>”.

On the other side, God considers the interpretation of hadiths (dream interpretation) as a blessing; however, since Joseph was not a prophet yet, he did not recognize what a blessing it is. Also, since God says: “[God will] complete His favor upon you<sup>5</sup>”, therefore, it was this dream that guided Joseph in the life.

Regarding the interpretation of various kinds of dreams, some beneficial materials are sometimes expressed in modern psychoanalysis. For instance, psychoanalysts say that there is a kind of dream, which is called in French “Rêves d’orientation” and means navigating dreams. Psychologists declare that all humans see navigating dreams, but they do not understand the meaning correctly and these dreams are the ones indicating the upcoming events. Of course, such dreams do not foresee the future, but they deduct something from the current physical and mental state of the individual and reflect this inference to him/her at a different form in his/her dream. Similarly here, God wants Joseph (AS) to realize that truthful dreaming is a blessing. Additionally, as he was a child at that time and should seek guidance from his father as his mentor, so he only told his dream to his father.

Then, the Prophet Jacob told him: “do not relate your vision to your brothers<sup>6</sup>”. Of course, Jacob did not mean to tell anyone else except your brothers, but he meant to tell no one, not even your brothers. This command would indicate that a dream we see, if it has a real interpretation, must be revealed to someone, who resembles our father and in return, we should accept any interpretation he proposes. Afterwards, the Quran says: “Verily in Joseph and his brethren are signs (or symbols) for seekers (after Truth)<sup>7</sup>”. The story continues by pointing out to Joseph’s brothers’ jealousy and in the Torah, some detailed contents on this part of the story can be found.

The description of this story is that when Joseph’s brothers saw that their father loves Joseph more than all of them, they became upset and held a grudge against Joseph. Hence,

<sup>1</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 4, “إِذْ قَالَ يُوسُفُ لِأَبِيهِ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ”.

<sup>2</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 6, “وَيُؤْتِيهِمْ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ”.

<sup>3</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 22, “وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ”.

<sup>4</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 6,

“وَكَذَلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ وَيُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ آلِ يَعْقُوبَ كَمَا أَتَمَّهَا عَلَىٰ أَبَوَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ”.

<sup>5</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 6, “وَيُؤْتِيهِمْ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ”.

<sup>6</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 5, “لَا تَقْصُصْ رُؤْيَاكَ عَلَىٰ إِخْوَتِكَ”.

<sup>7</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 7, “لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ آيَاتٍ لِّلسَّائِلِينَ”.

when they heard his dream, they said: “you want to be ahead of us and be the superior?” His brothers also realized his dream interpretation, but since they were not aware of its divine aspect, they could not attribute it to the divine will and became rather more jealous. However, some interpreters say that all of Joseph’s brothers were nice, but they have apparently made a mistake in here.

When the ten brothers became aware of Joseph’s dream, they said among themselves: **“Truly Joseph and his brother are loved more by our father than we: But we are a goodly body”**<sup>1</sup>. There were wondering why their father does not care about them. This lack of attention to other children from Jacob caused jealousy and discord, and that is why observance of this issue has been asserted in Islamic rules. Jacob’s manner made them to pose problems for Joseph and this was the punishment that God assigned for Jacob; of course, this is the inference that may be made from this verse.

God sets tests even for prophets and apostles and in case of, God forbid, failure, he gives them a negative score, and proportionate to the type of the act, he determines the punishment. However, it is important to know that we are not authorized to dare and say that God punished Jacob, because the relationship between God and Jacob is like the relationship between father and child, and we have no right to intervene.

In the authentic news and sayings of the Immaculate Imams, the reason for Jacob’s parting from Joseph is expressed that Joseph had a slave-girl, who gave birth to a child. At that time, a slave was considered as a property. When the child grew enough, someone came to buy him or her and Jacob sold the child and separated him from his mother. The slave-girl wept a lot to God. God told her that we will separate the special and favorite son of Jacob from him and before he reaches his son, you will come to your child. It is stated that the young man, who brought Joseph’s shirt from Egypt to Canaan, to put it over the head and eyes of Jacob to make him to regain his eyesight, saw a woman sitting in a corner. He asked her: “Where is the house of Jacob?” She showed it and said: “what is your affair with Jacob?” the young man explained the issue. At this time, the woman, who was the said slave of Jacob, remembered God’s promise and asked: “What is your name?” and it turned out that he is the same child that Jacob had sold. This way, God’s promise was fulfilled and before Joseph reached Jacob, the child of that slave returned to his mother.

In other narrations, it is said that one day, Jacob had slaughtered a sheep for food. At the same time, a man entered who was hungry and could not find anything to eat. Jacob forgot to feed the man and God punished him in this way.

Maybe such deeds are not considered as sins for us, but for Jacob and other prophets, they are as evident as a little black spot on a white clothes, while it is totally unrecognizable on a dingy clothes. Overall, some people believe that Jacob suffered the divine punishment according to the will of God.

However, based on some news, since Joseph was a child and did not know the importance of his father’s saying, he told his dream to his brothers, which resonated their jealousy and they decided to kill him. But one of the brothers that some have claimed that his name was Judah and in some other news, his name has been mentioned as Levi, Levi is the one who became prophet after Joseph and prophecy remained in his generation, said: “do not kill him because killing the children of the prophets brings unhappiness and would cause

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<sup>1</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 8, **“لِيُؤَسِّفَ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ أَيْبَانًا مِنَّا وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ”**.

calamity; instead, throw him in a well on the way of passing caravans in order for them to take him”. Brothers accepted and put the plan into action. In the Torah, it is said that the brother’s name was Robin<sup>1</sup>, and his intention of this proposal was to save Joseph so that when brothers threw Joseph and left the well, he would come back and save Joseph’s life, but he could not succeed to do so.

According to some news, at the end of the story of Joseph, when because of the stealing issue, Benjamin stayed with Joseph, it was Robin who said to his brothers: “I would not come back to my father and I will stay in Egypt as I left my faith in his hands as a guarantee to keep Benjamin safe and return him, and since I cannot bring him back and we were also blameworthy for keeping Joseph safe, even though I did not do anything wrong, but we all are guilty, I would be embarrassed before our father”. So, his stayed in Egypt. The Quran says: “**The eldest of them said, ‘Do you not know that your father has taken upon you an oath by Allah and [that] before you failed in [your duty to] Joseph? So I will never leave [this] land until my father permits me or Allah decides for me, and He is the best of judges**”<sup>2</sup>. It is interesting that he did not say: go and tell our father<sup>3</sup> that Benjamin has stolen, but said tell your father<sup>4</sup>. It seems that Robin himself knew that the son of Jacob would not steal and such a claim was strange for him. Hence, he said: “**Return to your father and say, ‘O our father, indeed your son has stolen, and we did not testify except to what we knew. And we were not witnesses of the unseen**”<sup>5</sup>. As I mentioned before, according to the sayings, Joseph became the successor of Jacob and after him, this brother took his place.

Overall, after they threw Joseph into the bottom of the well, a caravan passed the place. Some have declared that the head of the caravan was Malik Ibn Za’ar, who was the descendant of Abraham by four generations. He found Joseph and bought him from his brothers. It is also conveyed that Malik Ibn Za’ar had previously seen a dream, which had been interpreted that he would find a slave in the land of Canaan, who brings him a lot of blessing in this world and hereafter.

Ultimately, when Joseph’s brothers sold him to Malik Ibn Za’ar, they came back to Jacob and stated: “a wolf attacked Joseph in the desert and tore him, and this blood-stained shirt also testifies our truthfulness”. The key point here is that when Joseph’s brothers decided to take Joseph (AS) to the desert and kill him, they did not know how they should perform their intention, without letting Jacob (AS) seemingly know about it. This is where one can realize that whenever something is supposed to happen according to the divine will, someone himself may say something that directs his enemies the way to destroy himself. When Joseph’s brothers told their father that we want to take Joseph to the desert for recreation, Jacob (AS) said: “**I fear that a wolf would eat him while you are of him unaware**”<sup>6</sup>. Also, another issue here is that whatever comes to the mind of the prophet of God, somehow will be objectively manifested. When Joseph’s brothers fulfilled their plan,

<sup>1</sup> Torah, Genesis, Chapter 37, Verse: 21.

<sup>2</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 80,

"قَالَ كَبِيرُهُمْ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ أَبَاكُمْ قَدْ أَخَذَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَوْثِقًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمِن قَبْلُ مَا فَرَّطْتُمْ فِي يُوسُفَ فَلَنْ أَبْرَحَ الْأَرْضَ حَتَّى يَأْذَنَ لِي أَبِي أَوْ يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ لِي وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ".

<sup>3</sup> أبانا

<sup>4</sup> أيكم

<sup>5</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 81, "ارْجِعُوا إِلَى آبَائِكُمْ فَقُولُوا يَا أَبَانَا إِنَّ ابْنَكَ سَرَقَ وَمَا شَهِدْنَا إِلَّا بِمَا عَلَّمَنَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِلْغَيْبِ حَافِظِينَ".

<sup>6</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 13, "أَخَافُ أَنْ يَأْكُلَهُ الدَّبَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غَافِلُونَ".

they returned and showed Joseph’s blood-stained shirt to Jacob and told him that a wolf ate Joseph. Jacob became very sad and told them: **“Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting”**<sup>1</sup>. Maybe Jacob referred to his heart and realized that this is the punishment, God has decreed for him and on this basis, he failed to understand that they have lied to him and he evidently believed them.

Another point is that in Surah Yusuf, we are faced with two characters of the Prophet Jacob (AS): one character is related to the aspect of **“I am only a man like you”**<sup>2</sup> and from this viewpoint, he could not know that Joseph is in the well of Canaan. But his other character is related to the aspect, which is inspired from the divine revelation. Therefore, when *Bashir* (congratulator/the young man cited before) brings Joseph’s shirt to Jacob, the aspect of **“(but) the inspiration has come to me”**<sup>3</sup> of Jacob is exposed and he states: **“Did I not tell you that I know from Allah that which you do not know?”**<sup>4</sup> The verses of Saadi (may god bless him) also refer to these two aspects and characters of Jacob, where he says:

*One asked the man who had lost his son:  
O’ noble and wise old man!*

*As you have smelt the odor of his garment from Egypt  
Why have you not seen him in the well of Canaan?*

He replied:

*‘My state is that of leaping lightning.  
One moment it appears and at another vanishes.*

*I am sometimes sitting in high heaven.  
Sometimes I cannot see the back of my foot.*

*Were a dervish always to remain in that state  
He would not care for the two worlds.*<sup>5</sup>

But in some news, it is stated that Jacob (AS) after seeing the blood-stained shirt of Joseph had said that what kind of wolf it was that has been severely furious with Joseph’s body, but shown mercy to his shirt, and it has eaten Joseph, but not torn his shirt<sup>6</sup>.

The story continues and that caravan takes Joseph to Egypt. At those times, “Pharaoh” was used as the title of the Egyptian kings, similar to “Kasra” that was the title of the Sassanid kings. In the Quran, wherever “Pharaoh” is used, it also means arrogance and selfishness. But in the story of Joseph, the king of Egypt is not addressed as “Pharaoh”, but called “Malek”. This indicates that the Quran paid attention to the true nature of the person and used this title, instead. The Pharaoh in the era of Joseph (AS) is said to be Ryan Ibn Walid, who believed Joseph and passed away in the lifetime of His Honorable Joseph.

<sup>1</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 18, “هَلْ سَأَلْتُمْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ أَمْراً فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ”.

<sup>2</sup> Quran, Surah: Al-Kahf, Verse: 110, “أَنَا بَشِيرٌ مَّفْلُكٌ”.

<sup>3</sup> Quran, Surah: Al-Kahf, Verse: 110, “يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ”.

<sup>4</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 96, “أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ”.

<sup>5</sup> Kulliyat-e-Saadi, with the aid of Dr. Mazaher Mosaffa, published by Rozaneh, Tehran, 2004, Golestan, Chapter 2, Story 10, pp. 43, Lines 11-16.

<sup>6</sup> Tafsir Al-Safi, by Mullah Muhammad Mohsen Feyz Kashani, published by Muassast al-Alami lil-Matbuat, Beirut, Lebanon, Vol. 2, p. 10.



The Quran states in the next verses that Zuleika wanted to take her pleasure of Joseph. She was a woman who was famous for her beauty. It is said that before she married Egypt's Aziz, whose name was Potiphar Ibn Rouayheb, she dreamed that she would be the wife of a high ranked man. The word "Aziz" almost means "Excellency", which was used for the Prime Minister or Chancellor of the King of Egypt (Pharaoh), who was a high official. Later, when Egypt's Aziz proposed to her, despite his old age and being sterile, based on the dream she had seen, she accepted him and became his wife. However, after marriage, she noticed that he is not the one she had seen in her dream. Nevertheless, this issue is stated not in the Quran, but in the reported narrations. However, her dream later came true and she became the wife of Egypt's Aziz, the Honorable Prophet Joseph (AS).

Nonetheless, according to this verse, **"And she, in whose house he was, sought to seduce him. She closed the doors and said, "Come, you." He said, "[I seek] the refuge of Allah. Indeed, he is my master, who has made good my residence. Indeed, wrongdoers will not succeed."**<sup>1</sup>, Zuleika intended to make the Prophet Joseph commit a great sin. Even though her conspiracy did not work, her deed was invidious and inappropriate; however, it should be noticed that the Quran did not mention her badly, whereas in Surah of At-Tahrim, the Quran mentioned the wives of the Prophets Lot and Noah badly: **"Allah presents an example of those who disbelieved: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. They were under two of Our righteous servants but betrayed them, so those prophets did not avail them from Allah at all, and it was said, "Enter the Fire with those who enter"**<sup>2</sup>. All these materials might indicate the fact that Zuleika was in some way of communicating with God, and based on the divine essence she possessed, God treated her with compassion. Also, she might have thought that since she did not have any children and her spouse was not her desired husband, she could commit such a heinous act. But the point about Zuleika is that after Joseph interpreted the dream of Malek and thereafter, Malek asked the Egyptian women about Joseph, here, even though she could deny Joseph's purity, she confessed her sin and stated: **"Now the truth has become evident. It was I who sought to seduce him, and indeed, he is of the truthful."**<sup>3</sup> Although Zuleika caused Joseph (AS) being imprisoned by Egypt's Aziz, because she admitted her guilt and through that, she saved an innocent from being charged, while she was free not to do that, this behavior is considered a wellness for her and perhaps, this is why God had mercy on her, since she committed a sin, but then compensated and her repentance was accepted.

Well, from here that Zuleika repented and, so-called, flew into the sea of repentance, the Quran does not any longer mention her. But despite all the mentioned, the reason for her to commit such a sin might refer to this fact that while a human can achieve the high levels of sagacity, at the same time, he or she can deteriorate and fall to the level of animals. Jami says:

*The human is a unique concoction composed of  
Both angels and animals*

<sup>1</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 23,

"وَرَاوَدَتْهُ الْيَاسِيَةُ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَعَلَّقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْت لَكَ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ".

<sup>2</sup> Quran, Surah: At-Tahrim, Verse: 10,

"ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا امْرَأَتِ نُوحٍ وَامْرَأَتِ لُوطٍ كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ مِن عِبَادِنَا صَالِحِينَ فَخَانَتَاهُمَا فَلَمْ يُغْنِيَا عَنْهُمَا مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَقِيلَ ادْخُلَا النَّارَ مَعَ الدَّٰخِلِينَ".

<sup>3</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 51, "الآنَ حَصْحَصَ الْحَقُّ أَنَا رَاوِدْتُهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّٰدِقِينَ".

*If he desires to be an angel, he can be even better,  
And if he desires to be like an animal, he can be even more abject.*

Another matter that should be legally discussed here is that the relationship and intercourse between a man and a woman is not a problem in itself, but if it is done under certain conditions, it will cause the attachment of an attribute or a description, which gives value to it. This means that if the action is according to God's commands, it will be right and bring positive effects, as the late Majlisi narrated that if this act is performed between a husband and a wife, after the *Qosl* (body wash), for every drop of water falling from his/her body, for example, seventy thousand angels will pray for him/her<sup>1</sup>. But if it is not based on the divine instructions, it will be considered as negative, will be downgraded, will turn into an animal act, will cause regression for the human, and some punishment has been assigned for it. Thus, the intention of the parties, the conditions, and the characteristics of the two people who conduct this act, are important and critical in the assessment of the act, and the assigned penalty is not only related to the act, but also to the intention of the parties and the conditions in which the action has been performed<sup>2</sup>.

God has naturally placed the sexual instinct in the human being and animal. However, with animals, there is a different condition. For instance, cows become virile (ready to mate) in a certain period, or if we would observe carefully, cats also become virile in a certain period; actually, a male cat does not always mate with females and it is only in a certain time, and also when a female is pregnant, no other male will approach her. In human beings, the situation is different and there is no specific time. A woman, within an age range but at all

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<sup>1</sup> Of course, I do not know how the number of angels has been obtained! God bless the deceased Mullah Khodadad Kheybargi, who was Akhund (Mullah) and had a school. His Honorable Ali-Shah said: "from my age (i.e., during the childhood of His Honorable Ali-Shah himself) until the age of Mahmoud (i.e., the childhood of Doctor Mahmoud Tabandeh, his youngest child), everyone (of us/his children) has learnt school lessons and Quran-reading at the school of Mullah Khodadad". He had special statistics of the number of angels. For example, he said that on the morning of Ashura, 1,500 angels were around the Imam Hussain (AS) and expressed that we are at your service, and he dismissed them. Or, during the prayer before the noon of Ashura, 10,012 Angels stood behind him, or after the prayer, 15,176 angels were there. Overall, his statistics were very meticulous! In fact, similar to some statistics that are generally published nowadays. His Honorable Ali-Shah held him in respect, but someday, asked him: "Mullah! From which book you state such statistics?" He responded that I have a manuscript in which these statistics are written. He asked: "What is the name of the book?" He replied: "Unfortunately, the first page and also the last page of the book were missing".

<sup>2</sup> But the legal point, which is noteworthy in this regard, is that as stated in Surah of An-Nur, Verse 19: **Indeed, those who like that immorality should be spread [or publicized] among those who have believed will have a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter** ( **إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ** ) ( **في الدنيا والآخرة** ), God did not want a sin to be developed in the society, whether the act itself, or the story. That is why for this act, taking a legal proof has been strictly emphasized in such a way that providing such a proof to the jurist has become almost impossible, except only through the confession of the doers; because clearly no one does this act in front of the eyes of four just witnesses (as proof).

When Verses 4 and 5 of Surah of An-Nur were descended, one of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad, named Saad or Asem Ansari, went to him and said: "Although I fully admit the truth of this divine writ, but if a man enters his home and sees his wife sleeping with a stranger, then he must tell nothing to her until he brings four just witnesses, and if when he brought them, the person has gone and the man claims what he had seen, must he be flogged eighty lashes?" Meanwhile, one of the companions, named Hilal bin Umayyah, for whom this event had happened, entered and brought the matter to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the Prophet wanted to punish him with the penalty of slander. At the same time, Verses 6-9 of Surah of An-Nur were descended, related to the *Le'an* command of condemnation, which expressed that in these cases, the man must testify four times that he is truthful and for the fifth time, he must testify that if he were lying, the curse of Allah would be upon him. Then, the wife must testify four times that her husband is telling a lie and for the fifth time, she must testify that the wrath of God would be upon him if her husband were telling the truth; then, the separation between the husband and the wife will take place.

times, can become pregnant and she is ready to reproduce. Therefore, in order for the human race to have discipline and regularity, God has specified some regulations in which the violation is impermissible.

In the story of Joseph, when Zuleika made the plan, Joseph found himself in a dilemma. On one hand, he was a young man and a beautiful woman was before him; on the other hand, it was God's decree, which had prohibited him. The significantly important matter here is that he succeeded to let the divine command dominate his instinct and this is what God has intended for the human being.

God put instinct in animals, and nature in humans, which is also called instinct in psychology. Animals follow their own instincts, which means that they lack intelligence and willpower to do or not to do an instinctive subject, but human beings are different, as God stated about the human: **“Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority<sup>1</sup>”**. Caliph (authority) is someone who is dominant, which means that he has the authority on God's behalf and therefore, he cannot be the follower of his own instinct like animals. Moreover, God does not aim to abandon man, because he might be demoted to the levels even lower than the animal level. Hence, he has specified the divine laws and instructions that if the parties came close by their instincts and in compliance with those conditions, it would be fully permissible; as he says in Surah of Al-Baqarah: **“so come to your place of cultivation however you wish<sup>2</sup>”**. And since human instinct is always there and also the divine order is always there, the conflict between the instinct and the divine order is permanent. As Freud<sup>3</sup> expresses: “a man's libido, as long as he is alive, is with him”. But since the instinct is often in power to impose itself, God has placed a barrier to tame the instinct. It is important for the man to put the divine order before his instinct, and the motivation to obey God must be strong enough to hinder the instinct and maintain the balance.

Thus, one of the important points in the story of the Prophet Joseph (AS) is that he could dominate the divine order over his instinct. The Quran states the reason: **“And she certainly determined [to seduce] him, and he would have inclined to her had he not seen the proof of his Lord.<sup>4</sup>”** Instinct is so strong that even overcame Joseph, but God proof prevailed on him. If God proof is realized for a man, he can overcome the instinct even though it of so much power.

But what is the God proof? Quran said about the Prophet Moses (AS): **“And when he attained his full strength and was [mentally] mature, We bestowed upon him judgement and knowledge. And thus do We reward the doers of good.<sup>5</sup>”** And about the Prophet Joseph (AS), when he had that dream, because he was still at the beginning of his journey of perfection, the Quran said: **“And thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of narratives and complete His favor.<sup>6</sup>”** But when Joseph came to growth and perfection, the Quran says: **“And when Joseph reached maturity, We gave him**

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<sup>1</sup> Quran, Surah: Al-Baqarah, Verse: 30, **“إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً”**.

<sup>2</sup> Quran, Surah: Al-Baqarah, Verse: 223, **“فَاتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ”**.

<sup>3</sup> When Freud founded psychoanalytic teachings, his teachings were highly criticized, but the major scientific foundation he built is still in place.

<sup>4</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 24, **“وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا أَنَّ رَأَىٰ بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ”**.

<sup>5</sup> Quran, Surah: Al-Qasas, Verse: 14, **“وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَاسْتَوَىٰ آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ”**.

<sup>6</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 6, **“وَكَذَلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِن تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ وَيُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ”**.

**judgment and knowledge. And thus We reward the doers of good<sup>1</sup>**". After this verse, as mentioned above, it says: **"And she certainly determined [to seduce] him, and he would have inclined to her had he not seen the proof of his Lord<sup>2</sup>"**.

The proof of God was the spiritual knowledge and wisdom, which God had donated Joseph. In the language of mystics, the meaning of the proof of God is the calmness and relief, which is descended to the Prophets and the righteous people, and gives them assistance in the major and minor worlds. Relief was actually the divine form of the Prophet Jacob, which was inspired on the heart of Joseph (AS), and in Sufism and mysticism, is called the "intellectual face", which is incarnated for the seeker.

Zuleika's plan to attract Joseph to herself was that she had arranged a place in the palace with the pictures of herself and Joseph drawn on the walls, which were sexually arousing and could motivate Joseph toward her. The provisions had been prepared in a way that after Joseph came to every room, they planned to lock the door behind. But in the Torah, preparation of such a place by Zuleika is not mentioned. It has been stated in our narrations that when Joseph was put in a locked room with Zuleika, he started to think what he should do. Meanwhile, he looked and suddenly saw that the door was opened; he went to the next room and saw that it was unlocked too, until the locks were unlocked one after another. Rumi with regard to this story states:

*If you step on the path, the way will be revealed to you,  
If you become nonexistence, existence will be conferred on you*

And in the description of the above verse, he expresses:

*Though Zuleika locked the doors on every side,  
There appeared to be a hopeless situation for Joseph to try*

*The locks and the doors opened and the way was appeared,  
Once Joseph put his trust in God and ran*

*Although there are no obvious means of exit from the world,  
We must run like Joseph amazingly*

*So that the lock is broken and the door appears,  
And you will dwell in the placeless space<sup>3</sup>*

When Joseph reached the last lock, he saw: **"her husband at the door<sup>4</sup>"**. Now, concerning this question that how may Zuleika's husband (Egypt's Aziz) had come at the door, we must say:

*I am telling the truth that the sedition comes from God,  
But I don't dare to say anything since I am so fearful<sup>5</sup>*

Here, God trained two people: the Prophet Joseph who was given the prophecy later,

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<sup>1</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 22, "وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ".

<sup>2</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 24, "وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَا أَنْ رَأَى بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ".

<sup>3</sup> Masnavi Manavi, Correction of Tofiq Sobhani, Book 5, Lines 1105-1108.

<sup>4</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 25, "سَيِّدَهَا لَدَى الْبَابِ".

<sup>5</sup> Attributed to Naser Khosrow.

and Zuleika who took the lesson proportionately. Later, when Joseph was jailed, he became familiar with two young courtiers, who were also imprisoned. They saw two dreams and described them for Joseph (AS). He interpreted and told one of them: “you will be given a good position and will be serving wine for the king”, and told the other one: “you will be hanged”. The second one told Joseph: “I lied to you in order to see how you may interpret the dream”. Joseph replied: “you two proposed your inquiries and what I interpreted will become the divine will, and will be realized: **“The matter has been decreed about which you both inquire<sup>1</sup>”**. It means that what you asked my opinion for is over and final. So here, while the dream has been considered important, it has been also shown that the word of the Prophet Joseph will be effective in the matter and whatever interpretation he makes will come true. That is why it is said that the dreams that a person thinks they are important shall be said to no one, but to the saints of God or a knowledgeable person, who could interpret and any interpretation the saints offer will come true.

Joseph, after telling their dream interpretation, told the person, who was told that he will be acquitted and become the courtier for the wine of the king, to remind him to the king: **“Mention me before your master<sup>2</sup>”**, and tell him that Joseph is imprisoned innocently. Here the Quran says: **“But Satan made him forget the mention [to] his master<sup>3</sup>”**. It seems that Satan was watchful and when he saw that Joseph has resorted to this person, caused him to forget his request. It gives the impression that forgetting the recommendation of friends might be due to the induction of Satan and while there was not much time left of the sentence, since Joseph had resorted to someone other than God, God says: **“Joseph remained in prison several years<sup>4</sup>”**.

In some narrations, it is said that when Joseph resorted to his prison mate and requested him, an angel came down and said: “God says: Who made you precious to your father?” Joseph responded: “the God.” Then, he said: “when your brothers decided to kill you and threw you into the well, who saved you?” He replied: “the God.” Then, he said: “Who sent you to Egypt and made you respected?” Joseph said: “the God.” The angel said: “God says: although we saved you from death and calamities many times, why did you resort to someone other than Allah?” The result of his action was that **“he remained in prison for few more years until Pharaoh had a dream”**.

Here, God calls this pharaoh “Malek” and according to the previously-mentioned matters, this is considered a value for this king. The Malek gave Joseph a high rank and Joseph became the Aziz of Egypt. Afterwards, when the famine occurred in Egypt, Joseph’s brothers came to him and he told them to bring Benjamin next time. When they returned with Benjamin, those events happened and Joseph kept Benjamin with himself. Joseph’s brothers came back to Jacob without Benjamin and informed him about the story. He became despondent again and said the same phrase as when he was similarly told about Joseph being eaten by a wolf. He said: **“Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting. Perhaps Allah will bring them to me all together<sup>5</sup>”**. In response: **“They said, “By Allah, you will not cease remembering Joseph until you become fatally ill or**

<sup>1</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 41, “قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ الَّذِي فِيهِ تَسْتَفْتِيَانِ”.

<sup>2</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 42, “ادْكُرْنِي عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ”.

<sup>3</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 42, “فَأَنسَاهُ الشَّيْطَانُ ذِكْرَ رَبِّهِ”.

<sup>4</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 42, “فَلَبِثَ فِي السِّجْنِ بِضْعَ سِنِينَ”.

<sup>5</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 83, “بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَنِي بِهِمْ جَمِيعًا”.

become of those who perish"<sup>1</sup>". In reply: "He said, "I only complain of my suffering and my grief to Allah, and I know from Allah that which you do not know"<sup>2</sup>". Here, even though Jacob had not heard from Joseph yet, he hoped that the divine punishment that God decreed for him has been finished and God would bring both his children to him, and it was for this reason that "I know from Allah that which you do not know"<sup>3</sup>". In fact, although Jacob had been told that a wolf has eaten Joseph, he tells his children: "O my sons, go and find out about Joseph and his brother and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people"<sup>4</sup>".

Ultimately, at the end of the story, the Prophet Jacob went to Joseph (AS). In the Torah, it is mentioned that when Jacob saw Joseph, he said: "now that I saw you alive I can die"<sup>5</sup>". But the Quran does not say such a phrase and states: "and they bowed to him in prostration"<sup>6</sup>". It should be noted that the prostration of the Prophet Jacob (AS) was not toward Joseph, because Jacob was both his father and mentor; rather, it was a prostration of gratitude to the divine presence, and Joseph's brothers and parents made a prostration of thankfulness to God.

Some say that Joseph's mother had died at that time and the woman with his father was her aunt and at those times, calling aunt as mother was common. After that, Joseph told his father: "O my father, this is the explanation of my vision of before. My Lord has made it reality"<sup>7</sup>". Joseph was certainly very happy and in the narrations, it is stated that since Joseph neglected to thank his father, who was also his spiritual mentor, Gabriel came down to him and said: "Joseph! Open your hand"; he opened and a light came out of his hand and went to the sky. Joseph asked: "What was that light?" Gabriel replied: "It was the light of greatness and knowledge", and as mystics put it, it was the light of guardianship<sup>8</sup> that God had placed in your generation, and because you could not completely respect and appreciate your father, Jacob, the light left your generation. Therefore, Joseph succeeded his father, but after him, the brother who intended to save him from the well and had prevented his killing, and also in the case of the theft accusation attributed to Benjamin, had said: "I will never return without Benjamin to the Father, because I pledged my faith"<sup>9</sup>", became the successor of the Prophet Joseph (AS) and thus, the prophecy remained in the lineage of Jacob (AS). At the end of this Surah, Quran says: "There was certainly in their stories a lesson for those of understanding. Never was the Qur'an a narration invented"<sup>10</sup>".

<sup>1</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 85, "فَالْوَالِدَاتُ لِلرِّجَالِ مِثْلَ حَاقِيقِهِمْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ".

<sup>2</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 86, "قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو بَثِّي وَخُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ".

<sup>3</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 86, "أَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ".

<sup>4</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 87,

"يَا بَنِي إِدْهَبُوا فَتَحَسَّسُوا مِنْ يُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ وَلَا تَيَاسُوا مِنْ رُوحِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يَبِئْسُ مِنْ رُوحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرُونَ".

<sup>5</sup> Torah, Genesis, Chapter 46, Verse: 30.

<sup>6</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 100, "وَخَرُّوا لَهُ سُجَّدًا".

<sup>7</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 100, "يَا أَبَتِ هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُؤْيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ جَعَلَهَا رَبِّي حَقًّا".

<sup>8</sup> ولاية

<sup>9</sup> Tafsir Bayan a-Sa'ada fi Maqamat al-Ibadah, Haj Molla Soltan Muhammad Gonabadi Soltan-Ali-Shah, Haghghat Publications, 2002, Volume 2, Page 373.

<sup>10</sup> Quran, Surah: Yusuf, Verse: 111, "لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةً لَأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ مَا كَانَ حَدِيثًا يُفْتَرَى".

## Questions and answers

\* In some exegeses, it is expressed that Joseph had the position of guardianship<sup>1</sup> and Jacob had the position of prophecy. According to these interpretations, it appears that Joseph was the obeyed and Jacob was the obedient?

No. If someone is not in the position of guardianship, he cannot have prophecy. Any prophet is a guardian, but any guardian is not a prophet. The prophecy does not necessarily require to be received, but guardianship must be received. The guardianship after Jacob was transferred from Jacob to Joseph, and Joseph was given the prophecy as well.

\* Another point, which is stated in this story and is also basically true about the rest of the prophets, is the subject of “**I am only a man like you**”<sup>2</sup>. If the aspect of “**I am only a man like you**” for the prophets is true, so the concept of error and mistake should also be present; because in the human aspect, error and mistake may be spotted. But then, such a subject would be incompatible with the infallibility that Shiite believe for the prophets.

Concerning infallibility, the theories are very different. Some say that a prophet is infallible only when it comes to revelation and not in the other cases; in this way, from when he is appointed as the prophet, he becomes infallible. In the case of the Prophet Moses (AS), the Quran says: “**And when he attained his full strength and was [mentally] mature, We bestowed upon him judgement and knowledge**”<sup>3</sup>; meaning that he was not in such a position beforehand. This is why Moses (AS) responded to Pharaoh: “**I did it, then, while I was of those astray**”<sup>4</sup>, and that was before God bestowed me with knowledge and wisdom. Another theory is that with regard to major and great sins, they are infallible, but not about small mistakes that are permissible for all human beings.

\* Regarding Zuleika, how could be possible the distinction between the true love and the virtual love? Does it mean that the virtual love moves toward the true love? Or it has been a true love in the first place, which was subsequently turned into a virtual love? Basically, how could they be distinct from each other?

This is an extensive discussion in itself. There are three pillars in love: love, the lover, and the beloved. The lover is human and it depends on this fact that who is the beloved; if the beloved is divine, it is called a true or a real love; but if it is not divine, it would be a virtual love. It is possible that a divine love would lead to a virtual love, and a virtual love could also lead to a divine love. It is expressed in the psychology that love is the culmination of liking; meaning that the liker will like the beloved as much as lover will ultimately see him/herself faded in the beloved, and this is the meaning of the love. In practice, such a love occurs less frequently for a non-divine beloved or even does not happen at all. But it is likely that these two forms convert to each other; i.e., a divine love can turn out to be a virtual love, and vice

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<sup>1</sup> ولايت

<sup>2</sup> Quran, Surah: Al-Kahf, Verse: 110, “أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ”.

<sup>3</sup> Quran, Surah: Al-Qasas, Verse: 14, “وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَاسْتَوَىٰ آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا”.

<sup>4</sup> Quran, Surah: Ash-Shu`ara, Verse: 20, “فَعَلَّهَا إِذَا وَاَنَا مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ”.

versa. It is also said that “virtuality is an arch of truth<sup>1</sup>”. Therefore, even in the virtual love, the lover learns to forget himself. When s/he does such a thing for a period of time, s/he realizes that the beloved is not the one worth forgetting him/herself for. For example, in the story reflected in the Masnavi of Rumi<sup>2</sup>, in which a slave girl fell in love and became pale, and was given some medicine, finally, the love was lost and she realized that he is not the person worth fading in, and then, her love turned into a divine love.

\* Is the above matter true and relevant, with respect to the number of the wives of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the narrative attributed to him, which says: “I chose three things from your world: fragrance, women, and prayer”? In fact, could it be true that a divine love would turn into a virtual love? Is it right that the Prophet’s interest in women would be the conversion of the divine love to the virtual love? Can this be interpreted in this way?

No, it was the divine approval for him to have love with women; otherwise, imagine that the love the Prophet Muhammad had for Khadijah was very different compared to his love for Aisha. The Prophet halved the love he had for Khadijah into two parts: half was given to Aisha, who was younger and of the other type, and the other half was devoted to Uma Salamah, who was an elderly woman. In other words, the Prophet was allowed to have this type of love.

\* With respect to the materials you provided about dreaming, in the psychoanalysis, they raise this issue relating to unconsciousness, and they even relate the revelation to unconsciousness; to what extent psychoanalysis could be our measure and reference when talking about this matter?

The emergence of psychoanalysis dates back to more than nearly a hundred years ago and it is still an infant. God, in problems and difficulties, sends us all kinds of aids, such as the intellectual aid, or he sometimes sends us an army, like when Muslims were fighting and Hamza came to assist them. Similarly, God sometimes creates a baby and it will be grown up to help us. Psychoanalysis is currently aiding us in many areas. For instance, it has been positive to verify our understanding and has proved our words and then, it can be said that it has guided us. But it is obviously incorrect to rely on the psychoanalysis. Instead, it should be said that God has provided us with the psychoanalysis to strengthen our faith in the matters related to it.

\* Do you prefer Jung’s psychoanalysis to Freud’s style, or vice versa?

Jung’s style I prefer. Freud’s ideas were a reaction to the common thoughts of the eras before him and also his contemporary theories. In other words, while Freud gained experience from his own past life and set the rules accordingly, some of his thoughts were a reaction to the common idea, in which Christian clergymen (priests) claimed that talking about sexual matters makes no sense at all. Of course, it should be declared that some of them did not talk about it, but they did it in secret. However, the reflection of them not talking about it made Freud stating that everything is based on sexual relations. Before him, it was expressed that this matter does not affect children; but Freud said: “No, humans are affected from the age of

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<sup>1</sup> المجاز قنطرة الحقيقة

<sup>2</sup> Book One



five; someone later said that it would be from the age of two and of course, I reply that it would be from the time of semen coagulation”. This is how some of Freud’s ideas were a reaction to the existing ideas. Jung was at first the disciple of Freud. He and Adler were the disciples of Freud. Adler was a German and Jung was a Swiss. Adler said that everything comes from a sense of selfishness and the desire for power, and the individual seeks himself, but not the sexual desire. Jung extensively researched in this area and had even meetings with Henry Corbin. I did not find their detailed discussions, but Jung’s theories were changed in this meeting and became more divine. I would say that if someone does not know Jung and only studies his works, he/she would find him a theologian.

\* They had annual meetings in Zurich, where Corbin and Gerhard Scholem, who was among the Jewish scholars of mysticism, also took part. They were the scholars, who were gathered in Zurich for one week yearly, and their discussions were around these affairs. Their assembly was called the “circle of Uranus”. Apparently, in the psychoanalysis, the subject of dreams is very important, and if you have any specific comment on this, please kindly explain it.

Yes, that is right. Jung had not seen Corbin in the first place and even did not know him; but then they made more relations. As for dream, there is a type of dream that I, myself, had in the age of six or seven and it had a significant effect on my life and was very interesting to me. At that time, I had a very bad disease and was spending the last moments of my life; doctors had all said that there is nothing we could do. I was facing the Qibla and was dying. My mother and some relatives were there, and they accompanied her outside not to see me dying. At that time, I went to sleep and dreamed that I was in a place and going toward the valley of annihilation. Then, I saw Imam Ali (AS) coming from the back and he had a coffee pot in his hand. He poured the contents into a cup and said: “Eat! You will be alright.” I took it and drank. Shortly after, I woke up. I called them to come that I have recovered. Imam Ali saved me. Everyone was surprised. A six- or seven-years old kid basically is unaware of such affairs in his unconsciousness, therefore, it is probably related to the semen coagulated, which has some kinds of awareness. However, I pondered a lot to understand this event from the perspective of psychoanalysis; but I had a premonition, where God has said that it is not of your concern what psychoanalysis states. So, I left it aside.

Basically, I found the issue of dream very interesting. Once, I had a theory about the Oedipus complex, which is criticized by Freud. I studied it from a different viewpoint and wrote something about it. At that time, I was studying in Paris. One day, I decided to offer my idea to Leute, who was a professor of psychoanalysis. I told him that I need to talk to you for ten minutes. I said that I am a law student and have a theory; and I presented my theory to him. He responded: “that is fine, but have you read the books of this author (and he named someone)?” I said: “no”. Those books were about sex and sexuality. I think John Klonis was the author or the translator, who had been living in the primitive tribes for five years. Through reading those books, perhaps he wanted to correct my theory.